

BLOCKBUSTER SET THE PACE

THE blockbuster of all time was *Gone With The Wind* but in the 1970s that all changed with the advent of *ET*, *Jaws* and *Star Wars*.

Hollywood didn't start out as a movie town. In fact 100 years ago it was desert, hills and orange groves but in 1911, when the Nestor film company rented an abandoned saloon in the alcohol-free town for \$30 a month, a new era dawned.

Since then millions worldwide have been entertained by celluloid and films.

The epic *Gone With The Wind* has been followed by today's modern day blockbusters like *Top Gun*, *Back To The Future* and *Crocodile Dundee*.

Just what Hollywood, actors, the public and critics consider the 'greats and classics' is argued endlessly.

However there are certain movies that everyone does agree can be truthfully called Hollywood classics and which in the past 70 years or so — since movies were born in 1911, 24 years after Hollywood was founded — have become folklore.

The first film of note was DW Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, which was by no means the first film ever but was the first blockbuster and which in 15 years on release from 1915 made more than \$50 million.

Griffith showed that with more than just

HOLLYWOOD The first 100 years

● MOVIES have been part of our culture since the first director shouted "Action!" back in the early part of the century. The first blockbuster of the silent movie era was D. W. Griffith's *Birth Of A Nation*.

● The first "talkie" was *The Jazz Singer* and the first animated film was made by Walt Disney. Hollywood has come a long way since then but hasn't lost any of the glamor, as JENNY CULLEN reports.

flickering pictures and novelty, the new medium could tell a story, provoke emotion in audiences and give birth to stars. *Birth of a Nation*, along with *Wings*, which launched the same year, brought sophisticated editing and camera movement.

The next great breakthrough in movie annals came in 1927 when Warner Brothers held a premiere for a movie called *The Jazz Singer*.

Disbelieving audiences sat in amazement as they heard Al Jolson pretend to be a cantor's

son pretending to be a black and watched the end of an era as talkies took over from the old silent movies which had been accompanied by pianists in theatres.

For stars with high squeaky voices, like John Gilbert, talkies sounded the end of careers but for stars like Garbo, whose deep accented voice — "I want to be alone" was spoken in her film *Grand Hotel* and never casually by Garbo — talkies simply added to their mystique.

Originally talkies were crude and voices came

through squeaking and rasping.

The advent of talkies co-incided with the development of Cinemascope which was developed by Frenchman Henri Chretien using an amamorphic lens to compress a very wide image on to a standard 35mm frame.

The following year, 1928, a young man called Walt Disney gave birth to Mickey Mouse and the short movie starring his creation Mickey became the first animated film.

But it was not until 1937 at the then exorbitant cost of \$2.25 million that Disney had his biggest breakthrough, a full-length, full-color, all-animated film called *Snow White*, which was the year's biggest blockbuster and until 1939 when *Gone With The Wind* was released had made more money than any movie in history.



The blockbuster of all time: Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh in *Gone With The Wind*.

Disney ace breaks through

WALT Disney had a breakthrough in the 1940s with *Fantasia* when he tied classical music and superb sound with first-class animation, making it the all-time Disney classic and Oscar winner.

The classic films of the forties — *Casablanca*, *The Maltese Falcon*, *The Man Who Came To Dinner* and *Wuthering Heights* were all in black and white.

But *The Robe* changed all that in 1953 when Cinemascope, the technique invented 26 years before, came of age with the full-color spectacular biblical epic.

In 1963 MGM spent \$12 million on *Doctor Zhivago* with Omar Sharif and Julie

Christie and it became the biggest grosser since *Gone With The Wind*.

In 1966 Julie Andrews' *Sound of Music* outgrossed that but six years later *The Godfather* became the highest grossing picture ever and also a classic movie in terms of style, acting and Oscars.

In 1975 a man-eating shark and a young director called Steven Spielberg made *Jaws* and the film outgrossed all previous movies.

But within two years George Lucas had produced a film called *Star Wars* which took Hollywood into a new era of special effects.

★ HERE'S your chance to join the fun of Tinseltown with a great Daily Sun prize giveaway. You have the chance to win one of six *Jolson Story* collections — each containing a video copy of *The Jolson Story*, a double album audio cassette of the best of Al Jolson and a one-off collector's poster compliments of RCA Video.

★ Someone will also receive the Humphrey Bogart collection, including *Sahara*, *Dead Reckoning* and *The Cain Mutiny* plus a special collection item poster compliments of RCA Video. As a bonus another six people will win a copy of either *It Happened One Night*, *All The Kings Men* or *On The Waterfront*. See Page 20 for details.

Classic use of color

IN 1939, using the new process of color, Hollywood's biggest-ever film launched.

Gone With The Wind, starring Clark Gable as Rhett Butler and Vivien Leigh as Scarlett O'Hara, made its debut in Atlanta with its stars on hand and the author of the best-selling book, Margaret Mitchell, in the audience.

It was the most ambitious film ever and the longest — two and a half hours. For some scenes, Atlanta was constructed on a Hollywood lot and then burned.

Records

The casting of Scarlett O'Hara was the most breathlessly awaited event in Hollywood history but the role went to English actress Vivien Leigh, who was in Hollywood with her lover Laurence Oliver.

Today *Gone With The Wind*, when re-released through movie theatres, continues to break records and after almost 50 years can truly be called one of Hollywood's all-time great films.

While *Gone With The Wind* was made in color — Technicolor was a new technique — it was many years before all movies used color because of the

high cost and its as-yet overblown and untrue tones.

So throughout most of the 1930s and 1940s black and white continued to dominate, from the classic and beloved movies of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in *Top Hat* and *Flying Down To Rio* to Alfred Hitchcock masterpieces from *The Rope* to *The Lady Vanishes* and *Notorious*.

The next film that changed Hollywood was the 1941 black and white masterpiece *Citizen Kane*, the film that was written, directed, produced and acted by the 25-year-old genius Orson Welles.

Before his death last year Welles revealed the telegram his agent sent him the night *Citizen Kane* premiered: "Congrats. Stop. Reviews unanimous. Stop. Unparalleled triumph. Stop. The wine commercials now a sure thing. Stop. Likely we can get you spot next to Soupy on Hollywood Squares. Stop. Congrats, congrats. Stop." Hollywood Squares and a wine commercial? Welles put the thumbs down on those.

Tomorrow: The future

Don't touch phone me — I'm out

WOULDN'T you know it? Just when Telecom finally deliver my touch phones, after a 12-month wait, I find I'm hopelessly out of date according to a new list of what's "in" and what's "out" in '87.

Apparently frog phones, whatever they are, are the latest thing that everyone simply must have if you don't want to be regarded as as sleaze bucket (the latest word).

All the filthy legends own them, "filthy legends" being wonderful, fashionable, fascinating folk. Oh dear, the Telecom deliveries are so slow, I'll never have a chance to be filthy enough to join their ranks and my penchant for pies will surely ruin any hope of getting on any trendy's current list of severe (beaut) people.

Actually it's a little confusing, with mousse and pancakes featuring on the overseas list of "hots" but also on the Australian list of "hots".

Who can I turn to to tell me which list to follow without risking being put on the list of permanent "hots"? White rice is out;

likewise margarine. Well, anyone who ever thought this second-rate imitation was "in" simply has no taste at all — definite sleaze buckets.

Stone-ground flour featured on the "in" list this year but surprisingly not native women, whom I thought would be necessary to employ to grind the wheat. No doubt really hot legends sweltering at Spring Hill would only settle for Nardoo seeds gathered from the unpolluted far western plains.

They could fetch their yams which are very "in" this year at the same time.

"Severely hot filthy legends" serve fresh dates (funny, they were all fresh when I was a teenager) and raspberry coulis. I have to say it — what the hell's a raspberry couli? Sounds like a cough

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mixture, perhaps to clear all that stone-ground flour trapped in the oesophagus.

Home catering's got the nod, so I'm fairly severe there — that is, if my never-changing menu of a baked dinner and fruit salad qualifies for "filthy dinner party" status. Oh, I hope, I hope! Trouble is, most of our friends we usually invite come from the Gold Coast, which is on the "not" list this year.

Heck, does this mean we have to move to Noosa? It's bad enough having to throw out our Ken Done gear, beeping watches, Trivial Pursuit, camembert and instant coffee, peel the stickers off the car and cancel that fortnight at Great Keppel — all "out"!

At least we don't fly Egypt Air, which is now very passe and no one in our family is skinny or —